



Comprehensive Trail Plan Organizational Meeting

Meeting Notes

Meeting Date:	Monday, March 6, 2017, 6:00pm-8:00pm Mathias Township Community Building, E 2997 State Highway M-67, Trenary, MI 49891
Meeting Purpose:	To develop a Trail Working Group (TWG) to connect representatives from each trail activity group with forest employees to evaluate the existing trails system and collectively identify opportunities to improve the trail user experience across the forest. The expected outcome is one primary representative (and one alternate) for each trail activity group to solicit input from their trail activity community.
Participants:	
Forest Service	Charles Marsh, Loren Everest, Janel Crooks, Paul Holeva, Nancy Roseman, Brenda Rebitzke, Becky Cain, Mark Bender
MDNR:	Rob Katona, Trails Program Analyst, katonar@michigan.gov Paul Gaberdiel, EUP Trails Specialist, gaberdielp@michigan.gov Dan Spegel, Heritage trail Coordinator, spgeld@michigan.gov
Twp. Officials	Kim Peterson, Mathias Twp. Trustee – kdpeterson@tds.net
Trail Users	See attached spreadsheet for attendees and contact information

Discussion Notes

Welcome address – Loren Everest, Public Services Team Leader
Introduced Forest Service Personnel and Paul Holeva, Recreation and Lands Program manager

Forest Objective: Comprehensive Trails Analysis – presented by Paul Holeva, Recreation and Lands Program Manager

Meeting Objectives

- Introduce Comprehensive Trails Analysis
- Discuss the Roles and Responsibilities of the Trails Working Group (TWG)
- Identify User Group Representatives

Why Manage Trail Systems:

- Public Safety
- Environmental Conservation
- Quality of User Experience
- Resource Limitations



Historic Trail Markers

- 2005 Travel Management Rule – minimum required road system to administer the Forest Transportation system.
- Motor Vehicle Use Map – Inadequate, more connectivity, loops/routes
- 2013 – Travel Analysis Process (TAP)
- 2015 – Motorized Routes Proposals
- 2016 – New Forest Supervisor – engage all user groups for broad public support

Comprehensive Trails Analysis

- Review current Forest Trails System
- Assess user satisfaction
- Propose adjustments
 - Strategic development
 - Connectors, signs, etc.
 - Close underutilized trails

Trails Working Group (TWG)

- Separate TWG's for each Forest Zone
- 10 Member Team
 - 9 User Group Representatives
 - 1 Forest Service Coordinator
- Primary Objectives
 - Coordinate Public Input
 - Develop Collaborative Solutions

Trail User Groups

- Over Snow Vehicle
- ATV/ORV
- Motorcycle
- Biking/Snow biking
- Hiking
- Cross Country skiing/Snow shoeing
- Equestrian
- Water Trails
- Mushers

Member Responsibilities – Representatives (or alternates) are expected to:

- Attend and participate in all TWG Meetings
 - Meetings should occur at least every 2 months
- Coordinate with forest user communities for input
 - Name and Point of Contact will be provided to local organizations and posted on the Forest Service website for public comment
 - Coordinate TWG activities/proposals with counterpart on the other zone

TWG Sideboards and Expectations

- TWG is not a decision making authority.
 - Proposals will be used to guide future investments based on forest needs and available resources.
- Balance is Key
 - Plan must accommodate all user groups
 - New developments may require closures
 - Partnership is essential



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Hiawatha National Forest
820 Rains Drive, Gladstone, MI 49837
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Proposed Timeline

- April 2017 – TWG Kick-off Meetings
- Summer/Fall 2017 – Zone TWG Meetings
- December 2017 – Final TWG Meeting
 - Presentation of Comprehensive Trails Plan

Questions & Answer Period

- Q: The SORVA groups have already gone through this a few years ago, is this a rekindling of that effort?
- A: Yes, your efforts were not wasted we will use that data but, this is an opportunity for all of the other user groups to engage in this process.
- Q: Are we talking strictly trails or routes and how will people understand where to go? In the past horizontal road signs meant closed to ATV's/ORV's and vertical signs meant open. Are you going to provide maps and signage?
- A: Both, some of these proposals may consist only of establishing signage and maps. Some proposals may consist of adding connectors.
- Q: How much money and what funding sources would be available for implementation through this process? Our proposals will depend on what is available.
- A: We don't want to limit discussion by financial constraint right now. We are seeing our budgets go down and we don't know where things are heading in the future. State funding depends on the type of trail, there is funding for Snowmobile and ATV trails. At this point there isn't an allocated fund source for non-motorized trails. There are grants available and as a land manager the Forest Service can apply for those funds.
- Q: Are the regulations for Handicap Access the same as the State or different? We would like to see more Handicap Accessible areas in the Plan.
- A: We have to follow the requirements for ADA but you still have to be on a designated road or trail.
- Q: Do we still have the Hiawathaland Trail Association plan?
- A: Yes

Breakout Sessions - attendees organized by use group, network and finalized representatives.

Meeting Recap

- TWG Member List, Document and Updates will be posted at the following location:
<https://www.fs.usda.gov/main/hiawatha/workingtogether>.
- The West Zone Forest Service Coordinator
Brenda Rebitzke, (906) 474-6442 x119

Meeting Adjourned at 7:30 pm



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List of Handouts

- Agenda
- Trail Working Group (TWG) Guidelines
- Draft Purpose and Need

Action Items

- The West Zone Forest Service Coordinator will work with representatives to schedule the kick-off meeting in April
- Representatives should review and comment on the draft Purpose and Need prior to the April meeting
- Representatives can obtain a map from the Forest Service and should begin working on draft proposals prior to the April meeting



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